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Executive Registry
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : Review of CIA Message Procedures

1. This memorandum submits a recommendation for your approval; this recommendation is contained in paragraph 7.

2. As requested in your memorandum of 2 March 1966, a Study Group was convened for the purpose of reviewing procedures for processing CIA messages. Representatives of each Directorate participated in the study, and our conclusions are presented in the attached papers.

3. The Study Group confined itself to (a) reviewing procedures used among the Directorates for numbering and identifying Agency messages and (b) examining methods for showing transmitting and/or receiving times on messages. Some of the changes recommended by the Study Group can be accomplished immediately, others will require a period of months. Both the Cable Secretariat and the Signal Center are currently considering the use of automatic processing equipment, and if such equipment should be used, still further improvement in formatting and positioning of essential data could be made.

4. The Group examined the present system of assigning reference numbers to messages, and concluded that it is useful and should be continued. The variety of forms, abbreviations, and formats that have been used made identification of the reference number difficult. As shown in Attachment 1, the Group has taken action to eliminate this difficulty by adopting a standard form for all Agency messages. The new procedures will insure that the identifying elements are always in the same position on the form.

5. The Group studied the feasibility of showing times of transmission and/or receipt on messages. It was noted that all CIA messages do show in the first line of text the time the originator filed the message with the Communications Center. This time is valuable in that it provides every addressee with the date and time the message was released for transmission. A detailed study

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of the problem indicates that a typical message is processed in many Communications Centers and registries during its journey, and the precise time it was logged at any one step of the process is not meaningful, and can be misleading. There are from 4,000 to 5,000 messages processed in and out of CIA Headquarters each day and to attempt to add times on every copy of every message would be very costly in terms of manpower, and would actually slow up the processing of messages. To report to originators the times their messages are delivered to every addressee would flood our communications system with service messages. For these reasons it was concluded that we should not show processing times on every message. Messages are clocked at many steps in their journey and, when requested, the time the message was processed at each point can be ascertained.

6. The Group also reviewed the processing of non-CIA messages. Messages from other departments and agencies are formatted by the originating office, look different from our messages, and for the most part, cannot be changed in CIA. CODIB is the USIB Committee concerned with document processing in general, including such header control as number and identification from the inter-agency standpoint. Possibly some standardization in message numbering and formatting could be effected through it.

7. Attached is a proposed notice which advises Headquarters and Field personnel of the changes being made. It provides them with specific guidance for preparing outgoing messages and identifying incoming messages. It is recommended that you approve the substance of the proposed Notice and that it be issued in the Agency regulatory system. The Director of Communications is prepared to arrange briefings for individuals interested in the handling of CIA messages.

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Director of Communications

Atts:

- Att 1. Notices
- Att 2. Samples of Messages

The recommendation in paragraph 7 is approved

1 APR 1966

Date

/s/ L. K. White

Executive Director-Comptroller

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